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9. (Amended) An audio player system according to claim 1, wherein the base unit (1) includes data compression means (28) for compressing the digital audio data extracted from at least one optical storage disk (6) engaged in the base unit in use thereof, prior to storing the compressed data in the memory means (22) of the base unit.

3
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11. (Amended) An audio player system according to claim 9, wherein the player device (2) incorporates data decompression means (11) formed and arranged for decompressing the compressed data which is downloaded to the solid state memory means (10) of the player device (2) from the base unit (1).

13. (Amended) An audio player system according to claim 1, wherein the playback means of the removable player device (2) includes Digital to Analogue (D/A) converter means (21) for converting stored digital data to analogue form suitable for playback to a user.

4
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14. (Amended) An audio player system according to claim 1, wherein the playback means of the player device includes processor means (12) for controlling operation of the player device (2) and playback of audio data.

15. (Amended) An audio player system according to claim 1, wherein the interface means (4) of the player device is formed and arranged for receiving data downloaded thereto at at least the same rate as the rate at which data is transferred thereto by the output interface means (3) of the base unit (1).

16. (Amended) An audio player system according to claim 1, wherein the player device (2) further includes selection means (18) for enabling a user to select audio data to be copied to the solid state memory means from the base unit.

17. (Amended) An audio player system according to claim 1, wherein the selection means includes user interface means (18) for enabling a user to input track identification data to a non-volatile memory means (17) provided in the player device.

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20. (Amended) An audio player system according to claim 17, wherein the processor means (12) of the player device is programmed to input the stored, user-entered track identification data to the base unit, when the player device is interfaced therewith, and the base unit is programmed to use the track identification data input thereto to select the track(s) to be copied to the player device from the memory means (22) of the base unit.

16
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23. (Amended) An audio player system according to claim 1, wherein the interface means (4) of the player device comprises a standard Compact Flash slot and the output interface means (3) of the base unit comprises a complementary interface formed and arranged for inserting into said slot.

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25. (Amended) An audio player system according to claim 1, wherein the copy controlling means comprises the processor means (24) of the base unit, the processor means being programmed to prevent data from an optical storage disk from being copied to the player means more than a predetermined number of times unless the optical storage disk is reinserted into the base unit, and counter means (34) for enabling said predetermined number of times to be counted.

26. (Amended) An audio player system according to claim 1, wherein the copy controlling means comprises the processor means (24) of the base unit, the processor means being programmed to prevent data from an optical storage disk from being copied to the player device again until a predetermined time has passed from it last being copied, and timer means provided in the base unit for enabling said predetermined time to be measured.

18
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29. (Amended) An audio player system according to claim 27, wherein the base unit is also configured so as to request an optical storage disk validation process to be carried out by the user when the playback time credit stored in the base unit reaches a predetermined minimum value, and to prevent further use of the base unit until the validation process has been carried out successfully.

34. (Amended) A method according to claim 30, wherein the library of data is stored on at least one hard disk to which said copying system has access.

37. (Amended) A method according to claim 30, wherein said library of audio data comprises compressed copies of audio data copied from a multiplicity of original optical storage disks having the audio data recorded thereon.

38. (Amended) A method according to claim 30, wherein upon physical presentation of said optical storage disk to said copying system validation data is read from said optical storage disk by said copying system and, if the read validation data is recognised by the copying system, then the copying system allows the requested audio data to be copied to the player, but if the read validation data is not recognised by the copying system, then the copying system prevents the requested audio data being copied to the player.

39. (Amended) A method according to claim 30, wherein an optical storage disk having a copy of said requested audio data recorded thereon is required to be physically presented to said copying system after a predetermined period of time has passed since the requested audio data was last copied from the library to the player, in order to allow further copying of the requested audio data to the player.

40. (Amended) A method according to claim 30, wherein a predetermined amount of allowed playback time is credited to the player and after said predetermined amount of allowed playback time of the player has been used an optical storage disk having predetermined audio data recorded thereon is required to be physically presented to said copying system before any further playback time is credited to the player.
